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7 February 1957

STAT

[redacted], Chief  
London Bureau, FBIS  
c/o American Embassy  
#1, Grosvenor Square  
London W.1, England

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Dear [redacted]

Subject: Processing of Excerpts

You will recall that when I was in London the NBC asked us whether we could provide some indication in our copy of omissions within excerpts. I referred this request to the Editorial Branch and they have made the following suggestion for amendment to Section 3, paragraph A 19 of the current FBIS Editorial Field Manual:

Individual sentences deliberately omitted for reasons of content should be represented by three dots.

If whole passages are omitted, they should be represented by editor's notes, reading: (passage(s) deleted--ed.)

Editors are cautioned about the use of ellipses when processing excerpts to indicate omissions due to unintelligibility. Gaps in copy, resulting from poor reception, should be explained by editor's notes, e.g.: (word unintelligible--ed.) or (several words unintelligible--ed.)

We feel that the above method will approximate NBC needs, will not conflict radically with basic FBIS styles already established, and will be less susceptible to teletype errors. If this is acceptable to the NBC please send me a wire and we will issue appropriate instructions to our field bureaus.

Sincerely,

[redacted]  
Chief, FBIS

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SENDER WILL CHECK CLASSIFICATION ON TOP AND BOTTOM				
UNCLASSIFIED		CONFIDENTIAL		SECRET
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP				
TO	NAME AND ADDRESS	INITIALS	DATE	
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ACTION		DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY	
APPROVAL		DISPATCH	RECOMMENDATION	
COMMENT		FILE	RETURN	
CONCURRENCE		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION	SIGNATURE	
<b>Remarks:</b> <i>This is a follow up on your note on excerpts which you got from Campbell while in London. I suggest a letter to Campbell with a copy to</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 40px; margin: 10px 0;"></div> <div style="text-align: right;">STAT</div>				
FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER				
FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.				DATE
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*Office Memorandum* • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, FBID

DATE: 5 February 1957

FROM : Chief, Editorial Branch

SUBJECT: Letter to BBC on Processing of "Excerpts"

The following is suggested for incorporation in a letter to the BBC from the Chief, FBID, in reply to the BBC suggestion attached:

"1. Full consideration has been given to the BBC suggestion regarding a reconciliation of FBIS-BBC differences in the definition of Excerpts. It is believed that the following alternative will approximate BBC needs and yet will not conflict radically with basic FBIS styles already established. We feel that the method outlined below, if acceptable to BBC, will be less susceptible to teletype errors and will be more feasible, considering FBIS monitorial procedures.

- a. Individual sentences deliberately omitted for reasons of content should be represented by three dots.
- b. If whole passages are omitted, they should be represented by editor's notes, reading: (passage(s) deleted--ed.)
- c. Editors are cautioned about the use of ellipses when processing Excerpts to indicate omissions due to unintelligibility. Gaps in copy, resulting from poor reception, should be explained by editor's notes, e.g.: (word unintelligible--ed.) or (several words unintelligible--ed.)

2. The above modifications constitute an amendment of Section 3, Paragraph a-19 of the Current FBIS Editorial Field Manual.

3. Your concurrence in these modifications is requested at the earliest practicable date. You may advise Mrs. Anderson or Tom Weiss verbally. They can then dispatch a wire to me. When this is received we will issue appropriate instructions to all FBIS field bureaus."

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NOTE ON EXCERPTS

The FBIS Field Manual on Processing says the following:

"Excerpts are pieces of text: sentences must be reproduced in full with omissions of unintelligible words or phrases indicated. Deletions of whole sentences or more need not be indicated unless it is believed that a portion omitted because of unintelligibility might alter the meaning of the item."

The new BBC Standard Definitions contain the following:

"Text Excerpts are several textual extracts from an item not shorter than complete sentences. Sentences omitted within any one excerpt must be indicated by three dots. If whole passages are omitted, each individual excerpt must be enclosed in quotation marks."

The only difference of substance between these two definitions is that the BBC insists that gaps between excerpts must always be indicated, while the FBIS only does so in cases of unintelligibility.

BBC Editorial and its consumers make considerable use of excerpts as a convenient and brief method of conveying the gist, tone and highlights of broadcasts. We feel that unless the gaps in excerpts are indicated this method lays us and those who rely on us open to a charge of deliberate falsification by running disconnected passages together out of context. The utility to us of FBIS excerpts is consequently considerably reduced since we are often compelled to treat them simply as a summary.

It would therefore be of great assistance to us if the FBIS could bring its definition into line with ours.

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JGTS  
7.12.56